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[title page]

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000 in and the sufferings of many were intense, as dejected, hungry and stiffened with cold they retraced the weary one hundred and forty miles to Helena and the other settlements. No lives were lost, but the sufferings of the majority of the deluded band were such as to render it an occasion long to be remembered. Some could not believe it to be a mistake and kept prospecting and suffered severely. While a number of the prospectors were housed at Sun river awaiting the subsidence of the storm to enable them to retrace their steps, they were reduced to great straits for food. Little Dog was then cultivating civilized habits to some extent and was domiciled in a cabin, where, in the summer season, he made some attempts at tilling the soil. When no one else was willing to stir abroad in consequence of the severity of the weather, he made almost daily trips to the bluffs in search of antelope and rarely returned without a supply of meat. Retaining only enough for his own use, he furnished the remainder to the snowbound prospectors and thus relieved their pressing necessities. X. Beidler was among the number thus benefited and it is he who narrated this anecdote to the author and he still cherishes grateful recollections of Little Dog's hunting prowess and benevolence in this time of trial.

BLACKFOOT WAR WITH THE WHITES

175 Father Imoda thinks my introduction to the war between
648 the whites and Blackfeet substantially correct. He says the state of affairs could not at any period be properly regarded as war, as no general operations were attempted by the Indians.

The real trouble began when a party of Blood Indians destroyed a party of nine white men and one negro at the mouth of the Marias on May 25, 1865. This event produced a great deal of excitement throughout the territory, and Governor Meagher called for the organization of a militia company to defend the frontier and punish the Indians. It took post at Fort Benton, but such was its composition that it did little but annoy the inhabitants by its extortions. It had marched with high vauntings and was wont

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175 to levy at will upon whatever fell in its way that took its
648 fancy, repaying the plundered victim by promises of protection from Indian outrage. The company gradually dwindled down to some forty men with John Morgan in command, who, upon his own responsibility, marched with this remnant into the Blackfoot country, not to chastise
728 the Indians, but to have a bout at peace making. This
175 display of force rendered the Indians as anxious for peace
648 as the militia were and a council was held. Malcolm Clarke had tendered his services as interpreter and pa-
[682] cificator. He listened to the speeches of the Indians, who,
[186] in conformity with their custom of indemnifying a murder with presents to his relatives, offered to atone for the massacre on the Marias by presenting to the whites a horse for each of the men there killed, excepting the negro, whom they did not regard it proper to notice. Clarke interpreted the speeches to suit himself, and the answers to the Indians likewise, and when the proceedings terminated with the formal ratification of peace, Clarke announced to his companions that the Indians had presented the horses to himself in token of their appreciation of his good offices in restoring them to a footing of friendship with the whites. It did not transpire till long after that what the Blood Indians had really intended by the gift of the ten horses.

175 But whatever good Morgan may have done for the
648 frontier by this bit of peace-making he effectually nullified the following winter. A party of four Piegan warriors visited his house in the Sun river valley and were received with apparent kindness. It chanced that a party of prospectors, numbering eleven men, was then camped in the vicinity and some of whose members had indulged in bombastic bravado and boastings directed against the Indians whom they might encounter in their gold-seeking rambles. Morgan, leaving the four Indians in his house, went to this camp and told them that there was a chance now to put some of their threats into execution, as there were four Piegans in his house. This announcement was hailed with satisfaction. The party proceeded at once to the house, made prisoners of the Indians, who offered no resistance,

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and promptly proceeded to execute them by hanging. On their way to the fatal tree, about a mile and a half from Sun River Crossing, one of the Indians drew a concealed knife, and, cutting at one of the guard, attempted to escape, but he was instantly shot by one of the guard posted behind him. The remaining three were hanged. Unknown to the executioners there were five Piegan warriors who witnessed the fate of their unfortunate comrades in whose company they had come to the neighborhood. They flew with the tidings to their tribe and the fire of revenge was kindled. A numerous body proceeded to attack the agency buildings on Sun river, appearing before them in March or April, 1866. They lay in concealment and ambuscaded and killed one of the employees while going for water to the river, but the other defended himself successfully from the houses, which were so arranged as to present the appearance of a fort. At length it was fired on by the Piegans and the flames, communicating with a keg of powder, an explosion ensued that scattered the roof in fragments and carried consternation among the besiegers, who precipitately fled. The resolute defender was fortunately uninjured by the explosion and took advantage of the confusion to conceal himself in the thickets of the valley and subsequently escaped to the Dearborn ranch.

Other murders rapidly followed and the war thus precipitated only terminated with Baker's battle in January, 1870.

After the hanging of the Indians a fear of the consequences and shame for its dastardliness and cowardice fell upon the guilty perpetrators. Morgan soon found himself alone with his family in his house in Sun river valley. Morgan was the only settler and had gone there in the fall or winter and occupied a place where Little Dog had formerly made a feeble attempt at civilized life. It was about three miles below Sun River Crossing. His intention was to build a bridge and he was occupied in doing it when the trouble occurred. His provisions were swept away and the project was discontinued.

Not daring longer to remain in this exposed position he

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sent his wife and children for protection to the Old Mission and betook himself to Helena. Immediately after the destruction of the agency, the Indians proceeded to Morgan's house but found it deserted. A plain track, however, showed whither his wagon had gone, and, following it, the Indians were enraged to find that it led to the Missouri river and whence they presumed that Morgan had sought shelter at the Old Mission and been admitted.

A blow against the mission was, therefore, resolved upon, and, lying in ambush, they waited the coming of a victim. A man named Fitzpatrick, who had been employed at the Missouri as a herder some twenty days before, was the first who appeared, who, unsuspecting danger, was searching for his cattle. He walked into the trap and was killed. When he failed to return to the house, he was sought for and his body found. The Indians were seen skulking in the vicinity but soon left and proceeded to the Dearborn river, where, half a mile from his ranch, they killed Charles Carson.

(The Blood Indians say that the whites themselves precipitated the attack at the mouth of the Marias that resulted so disastrously. One or two of their number, leaving the main body, went forward to where the whites were felling timber, and, being rudely received, even threatened with leveled guns, fled with their story to their comrades, who, enraged, surrounded the party and cut them to pieces, letting not one escape.)

(See also "War with the Blackfoot Bands," Bradley manuscript, Vol. 8 of Contributions.)

CHARACTERISTICS, HABITS AND CUSTOMS OF THE BLACKFEET INDIANS

Fires

The Blackfeet formerly made fire by rubbing together two pine sticks. It was very laborious and they took great pains to prevent the fire from going out, carrying it with them on the march.

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HUNTING BUFFALO

224 The usual manner of hunting buffalo was by making pens at the edge of a precipice and driving the animals over, sometimes killing them by hundreds and even thou- [492] sands. The Indians were very expert in driving them long distances to the pens by means of mounted warriors. The Blackfeet had possessed horses as far back as their traditions extended but never in considerable numbers in early times, and even as late as 1833 they were poorly mounted. [411] They hunted deer, elk, antelope and other game by stalking, killing them with arrows, but depending almost entirely on buffalo and seldom sought other game.

BOWS AND ARROWS

411 Their bows were made of ash wood, bone, sometimes of [322] the horn of the elk and bighorn, bound with sinew. Their [321] arrows were pointed with flint, the shaft being made of the [237] limbs of the wild cherry, feathered in three rows. These [824] arrows were discharged with great force and precision. In [276] 1833, there were only about one gun, an axe, a kettle and ten knives to a lodge. Tobacco was extremely precious and eagerly sought.

ORNAMENTS

301 When Major Culbertson first saw the Blackfeet they possessed but few ornaments and these were small shells worn in the ears and on the clothes.

CLOTHES

294 The dress of men and women was made entirely of the dressed skins of animals, the Indians at that time possessing no woolen or cotton cloth.

KETTLES

415 They made in early times a sort of rude kettle of 323 moistened clay, shaped with the hands, dried in the sun and then burned in the fire. These kettles ordinarily held about two (2) gallons and were of cylindrical shape and usually [177] of greater breadth than depth. These were replaced by [439] vessels of tin, brass, copper and iron as fast as they were

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415 323 [177] [439] able to buy them of the traders and they are no longer manufactured. It is doubtful whether a single specimen has been preserved to the present day.

KNIVES

412 324 Their knives were made of flint, wrought into shape by a laborious process.

WATER VESSELS

415 237 Their water vessels were made of the paunch of animals, usually the buffalo.

501 [396] [481] BOATS

The Blackfeet never made boats of any description, any account to the contrary being erroneous. In crossing streams they made a kind of float from the skin covering of their lodges, upon or within which their effects were placed, men, women and children swimming, the warriors [492] towing the floats by a cord held in the mouth. Such horses as were fit for that service were also made to do duty in [481] transporting their riders. By these means a village of 500 lodges would cross a considerable stream within an hour's time.

WAR CLUB, LANCE

411 [177] [439] The Blackfeet used a war club of wood. They had no lances until they were introduced among them by the white traders.

VEGETABLE FOOD

262 Their only vegetable food was such as grew wild in their country, consisting principally of a wild turnip, choke cherries, currants, gooseberries, strawberries, bull berries and a bitter white berry that grows upon the red willow; of the latter they were very fond. Service berries were the most common and most esteemed.

SHIELDS

714 [281] [237] Their shields were made of buffalo hide, about half an inch thick, by a long and tedious process rendering them as hard as bone, so that they would turn an arrow and

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even almost deaden the force of a bullet. They were always circular, from two to three feet in diameter, preserving their shape without the aid of a frame, of which they were destitute. These were always handsomely ornamented with eagles' feathers and gaudily painted by the medicine men, who dedicated them with religious rites and songs, without which they were supposed to have no virtue. This shield was carried upon the left arm and formed an indispensable part of every warrior's equipment. When the trading posts of the American Fur Company were established in their country, the company caused a quantity of polished metal shields to be manufactured, which it sought to introduce in lieu of those of their own manufacture. The attempt, however, was opposed by the medicine men, who would thus have been deprived of an important source of revenue, and the superstitious feelings of the Indians induced them to prefer their own which alone could undergo religious dedication and enjoy the favor of the Great Spirit.

LODGES

The lodges were made of buffalo skin, tanned without the hair. They were made in the summer, in the months of July and August, when the hide of the buffalo was thickest, and always, if possible, of the skins of cows, as those of the bull were found less adapted to the purpose. From six to twelve skins were ordinarily employed, according to the size desired or the wealth of the occupants. The number rarely exceeded twelve but occasionally reached eighteen and twenty, and Major Culbertson relates having once seen one of forty skins that would hold a hundred people. A six-skin lodge was about ten feet in diameter, holding six persons, while a twelve-skin lodge was about fifteen feet in diameter and afforded shelter to eight or nine persons. The cover was stretched over from eight to twelve lodge poles, in the larger lodges from eighteen to twenty, standing in a circle and inclining inward till they joined near the tops at the height of from eight to twelve feet from the ground. The exterior shape of the lodge was, therefore, a cone, and it always had but a single entrance,

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342 closed by a skin stretched on a wooden frame, swinging on a string hung above it. An opening was also left at the top for the escape of the smoke, which could be adjusted according to the direction of the wind or closed altogether.

Lodge Poles

313 When the hides were tanned, shaped and stitched to-
342 gether, which was usually effected toward the close of
[221] August, the camp moved into the vicinity of the pine thickets along the slopes of the mountains to procure lodge poles. These were always of pine when it was obtainable,
[322] cottonwood only being used in cases of emergency. The poles were prepared by simply cutting them of proper length, removing the bark and paring the surface smooth.
[362] Whenever practicable the lodges were renewed every year, as they speedily deteriorated under the severe use required of them.

Hunting Periods

224 The Blackfeet hunted the buffalo to secure skins for
221 lodges in the summer months, while the skins for clothing were secured in the fall and winter months, the best being those removed from the animal in the winter when the skin was thin and the fur long and fine. Skins obtained later than February were seldom used for clothing.

Preparing Meat

262 Buffalo meat was prepared for keeping by cutting it in
[251] strips of from two to five pounds, which were dried in the sun or over the lodge fires. The Blackfeet seldom pounded
[252] it and made pemmican. The meat was usually cooked by boiling, but sometimes by roasting on the coals or by means of a wooden spit, especially in the case of the ribs, with which it was the favorite method.

Other Food

[252] The wild turnips were ordinarily eaten raw but were sometimes boiled. Berries of all kinds were eaten uncooked
000 or cooked by stewing in meat broth. Berries were often

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262 Berries were often
251 prepared for winter use, especially cherries and bull ber-
[237] ries, by drying and putting away in sacks made of young
[415] buffalo skins.

Dried cherries were also mixed with pounded meat and put away in the same manner, this preparation being regarded as a great delicacy. Stones were not removed from dried cherries, but before using they were thoroughly pounded so as to break the shell and expose the kernel.

[576] All fruit was a luxury in the winter, used only on special
[574] occasions, and to set it before a guest was a mark of the greatest respect.

Value of the Buffalo

237 It may be said that in the buffalo resided the means of existence of the Blackfeet. It was invaluable to them and
[415] no part of it was without its use. They obtained powder flasks from the horns, glue from the hoofs, lodges and clothing from the skins, food from the flesh and blood, marrow-fat from the bones, while of the paunch they made
262 vessels for carrying water. The marrow was obtained by pounding the bones, boiling them in water, and then allowing the vessel to cool, when the fat rose to the surface in a
[415] layer three or four inches thick. It was then taken off and deposited in sacks of buffalo skin. It was very palatable eaten with meat or a mixture of pounded meat and berries. It was regarded as a great delicacy and was rarely
[252] used except at feasts. The blood was highly prized as food and was prepared by boiling and adding, when practicable, a seasoning of berries or cherries, though it was often used without fruit. The Blackfeet never ate dogs, differing in this from the surrounding tribes, including the Gros Ven-
[136] tres, who occasionally indulged in a dog feast. Neither would they touch fish, although the streams of their country were filled with numerous fine varieties, including the grayling and trout. They also seldom ate antelope, deer, elk, bighorn, bear or beaver, preferring buffalo, with which
[136] their country especially abounded. All varieties of wild

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262 [136] fowl, too, they scorned to molest, though prairie and sage chickens, geese, ducks and curlews swarmed about them in untold thousands.

Salt

317 263 171 177 178 [272] [262] In common with all the Indians of the plains the Blackfeet did not use salt, although salt-bearing springs were to be found in a part of their country. Intercourse with the whites has changed their habits but little in this respect and salt is still lightly esteemed. It is, however, quite otherwise with sugar, coffee and flour, which they readily learned to use and now consume in large quantities.

Dress

291 [281] [294] Before the advent of white traders the Blackfeet dressed altogether in skins, both in summer and winter. The best clothing was made from the skins of antelope, deer and bighorn, but buffalo was largely used, in every case the hair being wholly removed and the skin rendered as soft and pliable as cloth. The dress of the men consisted of a shirt, breech-clout and leggings, while the women wore a single loose garment reaching from the neck to the ankles, confined at the waist with a belt and provided with loose flowing sleeves. The shirts of the men hung loosely about the person, the sleeves reaching to the wrist, the breech-clout being suspended to a belt worn under the shirt. Both 53 294 291 sexes wore leather moccasins, fitting the foot quite neatly, no ornament for ordinary wear but sometimes very handsomely worked with dyed porcupine quills. The clothing of both men and women was invariably ornamented with [439] leather fringe and sometimes with porcupine quills. Beads took the place of the quills when introduced by the traders. 291 [292] For ordinary wear the clothes of both sexes were plain, but as fine a suit as the means of the owner allowed was always kept in readiness for state occasions. In addition to the clothing above described, a buffalo robe was almost invariably worn, thrown loosely about the person for ordinary wear but secured by a belt for hunting and travel. When preparing for fight the men threw the robe back from the shoulders to expose the arms and body and very

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frequently went into action entirely naked. The dress of the Blackfeet was very decent at all seasons, the body being entirely covered, the women being as sensitive to any exposure of the person as their white sisters. Little children, however, were sometimes allowed to run naked, though the girls were usually clothed as soon as they began to walk. When cotton and woolen stuffs were introduced by the traders the men took to their use quite readily, but the women were more conservative and it was long before they learned to substitute cotton or woolen for their former skin gown.

Dye Colors

The colors used in dyeing the porcupine quills, horsehair and feathers employed as trimming were red, yellow and black. The red was obtained from the bull berry, the yellow from the root of a plant, and the black apparently from pulverized lignite, of which they had an abundance in their country. These colors were prepared for use as a paint by mixing with glue obtained from the hoofs of the buffalo. With this compound they often lavishly ornamented buffalo robes, saddles, bags, lodges and shields with nude figures of people and animals. Other colors were introduced by the traders and readily adopted.

Head Covering

Neither men nor women ordinarily wore any covering on the head. For special occasions, however, the men were provided with war bonnets of elaborate workmanship. This consisted of a cap of buffalo hide, usually supporting a pair of horns jutting out from the sides in imitation of the buffalo, ornamented with feathers, porcupine quills, strips of ermine, horse hair, and frequently a long streamer hanging down behind reaching often nearly to the feet. The feathers were arranged in a row around the head, and, meeting behind, followed the streamer down the back, standing out like the teeth of a saw. The only feathers used were those of the American eagle, which were scarce and valuable; they were not dyed, but were often tipped with red horse hair streamers. The best war bonnets were very gaudy, often handsome, and were esteemed in value equal to a horse.

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HORSE DECORATIONS

237 231 On occasions of ceremony the horses were ornamented with dashes of paint on the face and body and with feathers fastened to the mane and tail, sometimes by a mask made of the head of the buffalo, the horns attached, the eyes of the horse appearing through the original eye holes of the skin.

SADDLES

492 [237] The saddle of the warrior was a square pad of antelope skin stuffed with hair, provided with stirrups of wood bound with rawhide and secured to the horse by means of a rawhide girth. The squaws used a saddle-tree of elk horn covered with rawhide, often provided with an ornamental crupper, from which long horse hair was suspended [439] on either side of the horse. After the advent of traders [177] bells were attached to the lower ends of the horse hair.

BRIDLES

[283] The horse was guided with a lariat of rawhide, usually a single coarse strand but sometimes plaited with as many as six strands. It was simply looped around the animal's lower jaw, the lariat passing through the rider's hand and dragging on the ground often to the length of forty feet. [439] No other pattern of bridle was used by the Blackfeet until [177] introduced by white traders.

WHIP

[237] They were unacquainted with spurs, but used a whip consisting of a wood, bone or horn handle, some fifteen inches long, and a double lash of rawhide, from twenty to twenty-four inches long. A loop of skin was attached to the handle of the whip, by which it was suspended to the wrist.

PIPE

276 324 The pipe was made of a species of black marble obtained in the mountains, semi-transparent when the tobacco was ignited.

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000 276 [322] ignited. The bowl varied in size from a hen's egg to that of a goose egg, a medium size being the most frequent. Its shape was similar to that of an egg, slightly elongated. The stem was usually made of an ash twig by removing the pith, and was ordinarily about three feet long.

TOBACCO

Prior to the introduction of tobacco by the whites, the Blackfeet smoked only the dried leaves of a creeping evergreen vine that bears a small, sweet, red berry and grows [126] only in the mountains. The author has never seen a specimen of the plant and his informants are unable to give him any other name than that by which it was called by the 249 early French voyageurs, l'herbe, corrupted into *larb*. Be- 276 sides larb, the Blackfeet cultivated a tobacco plant peculiar [756] to themselves, the medicine men repairing annually to a certain locality and putting in the seed with religious ceremonies. This plant was smoked only upon sacred occa- [115] sions. Notwithstanding my informant had lived thirty years among the Blackfeet tribes, he never saw this plant except in its dried state and is unable to describe it. When smoked in any quantity the taste was nauseous in the ex- 276 treme. When tobacco was introduced by the traders the 439 Blackfeet were immediately captivated by it. They would 439 pay the most exorbitant prices for it and gave it the fore- 435 most place among their treasures. They did not smoke it pure, however, but mixed it with larb in about equal proportions.

276 (Note—The Blackfeet never smoked the bark of the wil- 171 low called kinnikinick. The Crows also used larb exclusively, while the Sioux used only the willow. The Assiniboines preferred larb but used the willow when larb was not obtainable.)

MEDICINE PIPE

276 The pipe for ordinary use was without ornament, but [531] besides there was a pipe for sacred occasions known as the [237] Medicine or Sacred pipe, which was ornamented with eagle [778] feathers and porcupine quills, and they were held in great 000 veneration. Their owners were called pipe stem bearers,

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Their owners[A] were called pipe stem bearers, and the position was one of great distinction. The pipe stem bearer was regarded as a medicine man, had power to quell frays and disorders that none would gainsay, took precedence even of the chiefs in treaties and councils, and their lodges were places of refuge to which the criminal of every grade could fly and be safe from harm. They were to be distinguished by a braid of hair in the center of the forehead, which hung down before the face, and they painted the face in a peculiar manner by a red cross down the nose and across the forehead and a red or green spot on each cheek. The pipe was kept in a skin case painted red, and was only taken out upon important occasions and then with great ceremony, the assembled people sitting quiet, grave and attentive, while the bearer made incense by dropping dry cedar leaves upon live coals and chanted in slow time a guttural song accompanied by peculiar movements of the arms. These pipes were all very old, apparently handed down through many generations until the occasion that had conferred upon them their peculiar virtue was lost even from tradition. A pipe that accident might have shown seemingly to possess unusual power could be dedicated as a sacred pipe by a convocation of medicine men but it was a privilege rarely exercised. There were only about half a dozen of them in each band of the Blackfeet and these were held in great veneration. Indeed, they might almost be termed the Bible of the Blackfeet and to swear upon the Sacred pipe was the most binding oath a Blackfoot could make. Perjury or disregard of the obligations of such an oath was believed to be followed by instant death. The ownership of these pipes might be transferred by barter, but their bearers were seldom willing to surrender the dignity they conferred. In value they were computed at about nine horses.

Religion

The Blackfeet believed in a Great Spirit who is all-powerful and good and has allotted to them an existence after death. The future life they think is to be passed at a point in the Saskatchewan, which they call the Sand

A. [i.e., owners of the Medicine or Sacred pipe--Analyst]

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775 Hills. Here all their ancestors are invisible to men, but pursuing about the same career they did in life. Their ghosts sometimes visit the living and talk to them in a whistling sound, which they hear in the sighing of the wind, the creaking of lodge poles and the rustling of leaves.

SUN DANCE

796 346 [313] [535] The principal religious ceremony is the sun dance. About the last of August each band resorts to a suitable locality where poles can be obtained for building the lodge in which the dance takes place. The poles are cut from twenty-five to thirty feet long and inclined together like the poles of the ordinary lodge, the upper ends being secured to a single upright pole standing in the center of the the enclosed space and projecting some three or four feet [824] above the rest. The exterior is then thatched with pine or other evergreen boughs so as to exclude the sun, only one opening being left, which serves as the entrance. The lodge thus prepared is capable of holding from three to 796 four hundred persons. In the meantime, a feast is prepared, comprising every variety of food that the resources [684] of the band can command. Of this feast all partake for three days, none being excluded therefrom but such women 796 as have been guilty of lewdness. While the feast is in 535 progress the dance goes on within the lodge, lasting without intermission for three days and nights. The dancers are some half dozen in number, all men selected from the entire band and they are stripped naked, the entire body, including the face being usually painted with white earth. They stand looking upward at the center pole of the lodge with a fixed gaze, blowing a short whistle held between the teeth, the feet a little apart and immovable, while the body is lifted up and down upon the knees accompanied by a movement of the raised arms similar to the flapping of a bird's wings, the elbows being bent at nearly a right angle. During the entire period of the dance the performers are allowed no nourishment but such as they can extract from a pipe; they often faint from exhaustion, when they are revived with cold water and again resume

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796 their places in the dance. As may be supposed the dancers
535 are worn completely out by the close of the ceremony. The movements of the dancers keep time with the beating of a drum accompanied by a monotonous chant which a group of old men seated nearby on the ground keep up con-
[534] tinually. The drum used is of rawhide, stretched over a
[237] wooden hoop, similar in shape and somewhat larger than a tambourine. It is beaten with a single stick, the pounding end being wrapped with dressed skin or other suitable material.

796 During the dance the warriors who have achieved suc-
555 cess in war during the previous year enter the lodge to
[782] count their *coups* and anyone desiring to make a sacrifice to the sun does so by hanging his offering upon the pole. *Coup* is the French word meaning *blow*, and has come to be the accepted translation of the Blackfoot *nah-mach-kach*, a word difficult to find an exact equivalent for but being nearly "a trophy taken" (Major Culbertson's translation), its root being *nah-mah*, a weapon or military arm. The various exploits of war are denominated coups and reflect honor upon their performers according to a certain fixed scale of merit. To capture an enemy's arms is a coup of the first class; to touch him alive, of the second; to touch his dead body or secure his scalp, of the third; to make a successful theft of an enemy's horses, of the
[431] fourth. Those who desire the privilege of recounting their
[537] coups must first present a horse to someone at the door of the medicine lodge (an irrevocable gift), when he may enter the lodge and in his turn relate his exploits, illustrating them by gestures indicating the manner of their performance.

The horse stealers, however, are not required to make the gift of a horse at the door but bring with them a bundle of sticks, and, casting one into a fire kept burning in the lodge, say: "At such a time I stole so many horses at such a place, from such enemies." Then casting in another
796 stick describes another occasion. Such are the ceremonies
[782] accompanying the sun dance, and when they are concluded all hands break camp and move away, leaving the lodge

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796 [782] standing with the offerings to the sun attached to the pole. These are designed to remain until they perish by the action of the elements, but frequently the medicine lodge is visited by prowling enemies, who despoil it of all its gifts. That they may occasionally disappear through other agencies would seem to be a fair conclusion from the following facts:

[177] [175] The Piegan sun dance of the year 1832 was witnessed by some of the white employees of the then recently established post of the American Fur Company, Fort McKenzie.

175 648 [782] [435] Among the other gifts sacrificed to the sun was one of those rare freaks of nature—a white buffalo robe—so rare, indeed, that probably they do not average more than one to the million. They are, therefore, extremely valuable and the white spectators to the offering resolved in secret that this rare treasure should not be left to share the fate of its companion gifts. They bided their time till the ceremonies were at an end, and when the assemblage broke up departed like the rest, turning their faces toward the fort. They traveled slowly, however, and when night came were at no great distance from the lodge. Going into camp they waited until the night was sufficiently advanced to conceal their movements from any watchful eye, when they rapidly retraced their steps to the lodge. Regaining it they first carefully reconnoitered the ground and then entering carefully sought the suspended robes. The pole was loaded with the various gifts, but in vain the eager hands sought to clutch the coveted robe. It was gone! Someone had anticipated them, and, greatly crestfallen, the party returned to their camp and the next day continued their journey to the fort.

What had become of the robe? That is uncertain, but one thing is sure—it was never afterwards seen in the Blackfeet camps. But it would seem that Catlin supplies us with the means of arriving at a solution of the mystery. In that year he visited Fort Union, proceeding in the fall to the Mandan villages, where the present Fort Berthold [439] stands. He records in his book that while there word came that a party of Blackfeet Indians had arrived at Fort

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175 Union, bringing with them for sale a white buffalo robe.
439 It seems that at that time the Mandans were desirous of
648 making a sacrifice of unusual costliness, and a council was at once called to consider the propriety of securing this robe. It was decided to do so and the means were provided with which to effect the purchase, consisting of eight of their best horses bearing goods of a value exceeding that of the horses. These were dispatched to Fort Union, the Blackfeet were still there with their treasure, the price was accepted, and ere long the wonderful robe was on exhibition in the lodge of the principal chief of the
175 Mandans. In due time after public curiosity was gratified
648 by its inspection, the robe was consecrated by the medicine men and attached to a pole over the Mandan medicine lodge, where, according to the custom of the tribe, it probably remained until it disappeared from decay.

It can not certainly be said that this robe and the one that disappeared from the Blackfoot medicine lodge are identical, but we think that few of our readers will hesitate to arrive at that conclusion.

SONGS

533 The songs of the Blackfeet had no words but existed in great variety. They were scarcely to be called monotonous, as they possessed quite a range of notes and varied greatly in expression from the lowest articulation to the most vociferous yells. They were, however, unmusical to civilized ears.

SCALPS

727 When scalps were taken they were turned over to the
535 squaws upon the arrival of the war party at the village, to
[462] be prepared for the scalp dance. This was done by stretching each scalp upon a hook, the hook being then attached to a small pole, six or eight feet long, a separate pole for each scalp. Each pole is borne by a squaw, usually a relative of the warrior who took it, who leads in the dance, the warriors and squaws all arrayed in their best attire following her in single file in a circle of a size proportioned to the number of dancers. The step of the dance is

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[727] [535] little more than a march in quick time, to the music of a song peculiar to the dance. Where the number of dancers is considerable several rings are formed in different parts of the tent and the dance is frequently kept up with intervals of rest for twelve or fourteen days.

HAIR

302 The Blackfeet take no care of the hair, never combing it, braiding it, or gathernig it in knots as is the custom with some tribes. Neither did they part it nor paint the [765] head. It was permitted by both sexes to grow to its full [142] length, reaching usually to the shoulders, except when in mourning, when the hair was cut off close to the head. In color it was usually a jet black, though sometimes in the young it had a light, grayish color, afterward changing to the invariable black of mature years. It was coarse and always dirty.

PHYSIQUE

142 147 [141] [526] The men were rather above the usual height, generally approaching and often exceeding six feet, well proportioned, active and hardy, but not more than ordinarily strong. They practiced no athletic exercises and the indolent life they led when not upon the war path or engaged in the chase were not conducive to great bodily strength. 181 They possessed an intelligent countenance free from vindictiveness or bloodthirstiness, reasonably good-looking, manly and often noble. In character they were good-humored, candid and truthful, honest among themselves but less so with strangers, talkative, fond of story-telling, easily excited to laughter, less inclined to conceal the emotions than most Indians, friendly to their fellows, and [727] affectionate to their wives and children. The returning warrior is always met with kisses and embraces by his female relatives, which he does not disdain to receive, and the father of a family is often to be seen playing with his children and apparently greatly enjoying their childish [854] sports. It should be remarked, however, that with children through the nursing period they have nothing to do, leaving them wholly to the squaws.

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142 The women are not above the ordinary height, have an intelligent appearance, are seldom, if ever handsome and rarely even good-looking. When young they have a fresh, pleasant expression, but it rapidly disappears under the burdens that custom imposes on their sex, and in old age they are haggard and ugly.

CHASTITY

684 562 [831] Chastity of the women is held in great esteem among the Blackfeet, but is practiced by scarcely more than one-third of their number. The unfaithful wife was formerly punished with great severity. The injured husband or any chosen friend might cut off her nose, her ears, or even take [175] her life. Cut noses were very common among the women in 1833, when for the first time the whites made the close [178] acquaintance of the nation. Since then the custom has gradually died out and seems now to be wholly discontinued. But severe as was this penalty a still greater might be inflicted upon the woman thus disgraced. Even without the sanction of her husband she might be forcibly removed from the village by the young men who then upheld the honor of her sex by making her an object of common gratification. After such an ordeal, if permitted to live, 672 she was regarded with universal scorn. Frequently, how- 684 ever, the unfaithful wife was forgiven by her husband, 562 who sought his redress from her partner in crime. It was his privilege to dispossess him of horses, arms, and in short, everything he may own, and for property thus taken there was no reclamation. Should the paramour be unmarried and without an establishment of his own then redress may be sought from his father.

[431] There was no other recognized punishment for the male criminal, but, as occurred sometimes in civilized society, he was occasionally slain by the injured husband, who then made peace with the relatives of the victim by the [628] customary gifts. When all the parties belonged to the [621] same band, the matter was usually arranged without much difficulty, but when two different bands it became almost a national dispute and scenes of bloody violence were an occasional outcome.

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836 But while the faithless wife was thus exposed to punish-
589 ment and obloquy, it was different with the unmarried woman. She was regarded as mistress of her own actions and no shame attached to her for unchastity. Many young women in every village carried on a business of common prostitutes without suffering any loss of standing. On the contrary, they were received everywhere on terms of social equality, and often subsequently became faithful wives.
837 A similar immunity from punishment or popular censure was enjoyed by the wife whose lewdness was with the consent of or by the direction of her husband. Such cases were not infrequent, sometimes from a desire for gain, again as a point of hospitality to a favored guest, particularly when the host, as was very common with the Blackfeet, enjoyed a plurality of wives.

INTRODUCTION OF THE YOUNG MAN AS A WARRIOR

701 Usually about the age of sixteen the young man is re-
702 garded as a warrior. He reaches this dignity by no ceremony, but it is tacitly admitted by virute of his strength, hardihood and ability and readiness to meet the foe in
[756] combat. When he first determines to seek the war path, his father usually procures the services of a medicine man, who paints him with mystic devices and mutters over him an invocation for courage, success in war, and a safe return, after which his father presents him with weapons
[729] and if able, a horse, and he is ready for the field. As a
[555] rule, the young men are very ambitious to distinguish themselves in war and seek every opportunity to win the
[883] honor that war-like deeds can alone secure. Not infrequently, however, they are great drones, lounging in the village, participating neither in the war nor the chase until they take wives, when perforce they must exert themselves to live.

AGE OF MARRIAGE

584 About the age of twenty-five the young warrior begins to
[582] think of having a wife. Having selected the woman he
[583] would thus honor, he loses no time in employing the civilized device of a tedious and uncertain courtship, but

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584 secures the services of a friend, who goes to the father of
583 his intended, states his desire and enumerates the gifts to
585 be made to him in the event of his consent. If the father gives favorable ear to his suit, he simply sends the girl to the young warrior's lodge, who there receives her and the marriage ceremony is over. It is usual for the parents of the girl to send with her as presents to her husband such articles as their means allow, and these often exceed in value the gifts that have been received from him. Two or three horses or their equivalent in other goods constitute
[562] the customary offering in cases of intended marriage. The wishes of the girl are not consulted pending the matrimonial negotiations, but she rarely, if ever, objects.

582 Such is the custom to which she has grown up and she
607 is a passive instrument in her father's hands. It is to be
[562] remarked, however, that should she have a brother-in-law of mature years, it is even more important to conciliate him. To him revert all the proffered gifts and his opposition to the marriage would generally prevent its occurrence. Where there are several brothers-in-law it is the eldest only who enjoys this consideration.

POLYGAMY

595 Polygamy is extensively practiced among the Blackfeet and the number of wives a man may have is only limited by his ability to procure and support them. If the eldest daughter of a family is first married, it is tacitly understood that her younger sisters are bound to her husband likewise, and as fast as they arrive at the proper age they are sent to him without ceremony.

FATHERS-IN-LAW AND MOTHERS-IN-LAW

602 From the moment of marriage all direct intercourse between a husband and his wife's relatives or a wife and her husband's relatives was at an end. The husband addressed his wife's family only through her, and she observed the same rule with regard to his. Relatives by marriage sought to avoid meeting each other and would turn out of their paths for that purpose, but when an encounter was unavoidable they would hang down the head or muffle the

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602 face until they had passed by. The same rule of etiquette applied to parents who were *mah-oh-tahn*, that is, who were related by the marriage of their children. Thus the parents of the husband were mah-oh-tahn to the parents of his wife, and the reverse. This is a happy word for which we have no equivalent in English and a chance is thus presented still further to enrich our language.

DIVORCE

586 Divorce was common and rested only upon mutual agreement. The wife, if dissatisfied, might return at will to her father's lodge, or the husband might for a similar reason send her back. The parents also or the brother-in-law might reclaim their daughter and the husband had [626] no redress. This was frequently done temporarily as a check to brutal treatment or an incentive to a lazy husband to better provide for his wife. This right ceased after the wife had borne children. In all the above cases of separation the husband was entitled to the return gifts [626] made before the marriage. The ease with which a wife might leave her husband greatly abridged his power over her and constrained good treatment.

CHILD-BIRTH

844 The Blackfeet women were very easy of parturition, a week sufficing in ordinary cases to restore them to perfect [846] health. Indeed, very frequently they would occupy themselves with their customary duties the following day and not a few instances are mentioned where they have been overtaken by the pains of child-birth on the march, and, after a couple of hours' delay, would resume their places [145] in the cavalcade. It is unquestionable, however, that such early resumption of toil (rendered necessary by their nomadic life) brings on age prematurely and has much to do with the haggard, miserable appearance of most Indian women who have passed the meridian of life.

CHILDHOOD

854 Soon after birth the infant was laid upon its back upon [824] a piece of bark of suitable length, or rolled firmly in un- [23] dressed skin, in which condition it passed the first year of its life.

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000 854 dressed skin, in which condition it passed the first year of its life. Upon the march it was carried upon its mother's back, either secured with straps or more commonly supported in a fold of her robe or blanket. It was sometimes thus carried while the mother pursued the ordinary avocations of the camp, but under such circumstances it was ordinarily set away in some suitable place. It was also a very common practice to suspend it by cords to the poles in the interior of the lodge, where it was permitted to hang 857 at rest or was swung back and forth as in a cradle. The sports of the children were such as comported with their savage life, being largely made up of imitations of the pur- 524 suits to which they were destined in after years. The girls played housekeeping after the Indian fashion of that art, built miniature lodges, collected little bundles of wood and made travails. The boys sometimes spun a top of ordinary construction, putting it in motion with the hands and then by a skillful touch repeated at intervals, keeping it spinning often for half an hour. They also had a game of ball, which was played by choosing sides, and then arraying themselves opposite each other, attempting by means of a wooden bat to drive a ball through each other's ranks to [237] a given point beyond. The ball used was about the size of a baseball and made of wound hair, covered with 868 dressed skin. The boys were furnished with a bow and arrows at an early age and given lessons in horsemanship as soon as they could sit on a horse. A youth of twelve [858] years was usually a fair hunter and a good horseman. The girls were employed in the drudgery of the camp as soon as they were old enough to work, but the boys were exempted from all labor except that of herding horses. They were assigned to this duty as soon as they could be trusted to ride, which was about the age of six or seven years.

GAMES

524 Foremost among the games of the Blackfeet was one which from want of knowledge of its Indian name we may denominate Blackfoot billiards. A hard soil was chosen as the place of the game, where a space about six feet wide

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524 by thirty in length was cleared of obstructions and rendered as smooth as possible. A ring of bone, stone or metal about two and one-half inches in diameter was provided, across which were stretched two beaded strings, crossing in the center of the ring at right angles. Two players participated in the game, each of whom was provided with a small stick about six feet long, one end of which terminated in a small hook. Standing side by side at one end of the prepared place, one of the players tossed the ring so as to roll it along the ground in their front, when both started after it together, throwing their sticks in advance of the ring with the object of catching it upon the hook. The players then resume their stations and throw the ring and follow it as before. A stick of wood is placed across the farther end of the course to stop the ring in the event of both players failing to catch it upon his hook. The writer has been unable to learn with certainty the manner of counting the game, but it appears to have been determined by the particular division of the ring (made by the crossed strings) in which the hook was [525] caught. Large amounts were often staked upon the game and the players would become so interested as frequently [171] to continue it the entire day. A very similar game was described by Catlin as prevalent among the Mandans, but it differed in several particulars.

541 The men also played the game of ball already described and in summer horse racing was a favorite amusement, [525] the course being usually three or four miles. As in civilized society extensive betting accompanied every race and there was nothing the Blackfoot gambler was not ready to stake except his liberty and his wife.

524 Another favorite gambling game was that of Open and
525 Shut. It was played by any number of persons, divided [533] into two sides, who sat facing each other on the ground, and, while all sang a particular song, some member of one side passed some small article back and forth in his hands endeavoring to conceal in which hand it finally rested. If guessed correctly his side paid a forfeit, otherwise it received one from the other side.

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524 The women had certain games peculiar to themselves. The principal one was played with six pieces of flat bone, six or seven inches long, shaved thin and sharpened at the needs and marked on both sides with peculiar lines, each side different from the rest. Two squaws played the game seated on the ground facing each other. The pieces of bone were all gathered in the hand and thrown edgewise on the ground, when the marks were counted on the sides that fell upward, the throw alternating between the players according to the count. They played another game called "The Bowl and Counters." The bowl was of wood, six or seven inches in diameter, and contained five flat seeds differently marked, which were tossed up and caught as they fell, the exposed sides being counted as in the case of
[525] the sticks. The women were almost as much addicted to gambling as the men and only their limited leisure and inadequate means prevented them from rivaling quite the sterner sex.

The Blackfeet had no games that could be considered merely social, and the men and women rarely played their games in common. This happened occasionally, however, more frequently in the game of ball. It should be added
[171] that the squaws frequently played ball alone. When playing cards were introduced they rapidly superseded all their former games except billiards and ball.

MUSIC

534 The Blackfeet had but two instruments of music, the drum and the flageolet. The former has already been described. The drum was used only as an accompaniment to the dance or in the incantations of the medicine men. The flageolet bore a crude resemblance to the civilized instrument, upon which some of the young men played a few simple melodies, always in the evening and usually by
[533] way of serenade. These instruments were very rare. The Blackfeet possessed quite a variety of songs, but all designed to accompany their dances or games. (See Songs).

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DISEASES

164 The more prevalent diseases prior to contact with the white race were rheumatism, neuralgia, paralysis, epidemic influenza, and occasionally pulmonary consumption, liver complaint, gravel and wens. Contagious diseases of every description were unknown among them until introduced by the whites. Those of a venereal character, which from the easy virtue of the nation have become alarmingly prevalent and occasioned an appreciable physical degeneracy in all the tribes, were first introduced by the Gros Ventres, who became infected with them in some of their visits to the Arapahoes upon the borders of the Spanish settlements.

MEDICAL TREATMENT

757 For the treatment of disease, the Blackfeet employed
756 a few indigenous herbs and roots, but the main dependence
was placed upon the vapor bath and the conjuring tricks
[753] of the medicine men. Their theory of most diseases was that an evil spirit had entered into the body of the sufferer and that a cure could only be effected by its expulsion. For this purpose the charms of the medicine men were believed to have peculiar potency, which procured their almost invariable employment. In the treatment of wounds a poultice of certain chewed roots was applied sometimes, but the famed, all-powerful "Indian doctor" was as much a myth with the Blackfeet as among other tribes, and recoveries are to be ascribed almost altogether to the recuperative powers of the patient himself and not to the curative properties of a limited array of inefficacious remedies.

BEASTS OF BURDEN

492 Before the introduction of the horse the dog was the
231 only beast of burden employed by the Blackfeet. The species in use was very similar in appearance to the large gray wolf, and is most likely an offshoot of that animal, with characteristics somewhat changed by long domestica-
[493] tion. In weight they averaged about one hundred pounds and are capable of carrying all day a burden of some thirty

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492 493 [231] pounds. This is effected by means of a device called by the Canadian French "travail," corrupted usually into travoy, traboy or travois. It consists of two poles, seven or eight feet long, spread something more than two feet apart at one end, approaching at the other just near enough to permit of the dog being harnessed between them. A sort of platform or basket connects them just in front of the center, upon which the load is designed to be secured. The harness is simply a collar and pad to which the travail is lashed. The introduction of the horse has relieved the dog of much of his former toil, but he is still employed to a certain extent, particularly by the squaws in collecting and bringing to the camp their little bundles of wood. When the horse is used as a beast of burden, he is sometimes provided with a travail similar to, but larger than that of the dogs.

GOVERNMENT

623 701 The internal affairs of a Blackfoot camp are managed by means of a soldier's lodge. This lodge is a sort of a military organization, consisting usually of from twenty to one hundred men, according to the size of the village. It is thoroughly democratic in principle, no member enjoying a greater degree of authority than the rest. Its origin is lost in antiquity and its existence has the sanction of custom from a period when the memory of man kneweth not to the contrary. It is a permanent institution, never lapsing, and its members enjoy their positions for life or till expelled for worthlessness or bad conduct. When vacancies occur by death, resignation or expulsion, the lodge elects new members from among the best and bravest of the band, no worthless man having a shadow of a chance of receiving this honor. When a camp is pitched, near its center will be found a lodge reserved for the deliberations of the soldiers who repair there whenever any matter comes up for consideration. At other times the soldiers live in their own lodges with their families. The power and authority of the soldiers is great and it is rare that anyone thinks of resisting it or calling it in question. An

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623 offender is dealt with summarily; for a light offense he
701 may escape with having his saddle cut up; for a greater, with the destruction of his lodge, but sometimes the penalty of disobedience to the mandates of the lodge was death. The chief escapes no more than the common citizen; all were alike amenable to this high tribunal.

The jurisdiction of the lodge extended to every matter of public concern, whether great or small. It prohibited individual hunting but with its sanction; it appointed the days for the general hunt of the whole village; it quelled affrays, regulated the departure of war parties, and determined the manner and the time of all changes of camp. On the march it took the lead and determined the route, prevented a separation of force, but with its consent chose the new camping ground and assigned to every family a
[622] place to pitch its lodge. The chiefs were frequently not members of the lodge, but were treated with deference and often led the lodge in its deliberations. These were sometimes in secret, but usually open to the attendance of the public. Its decisions were communicated to the village by means of certain old men, who filled the position of town-criers, traversing the various avenues of the village proclaiming the edict in a loud voice.

CHIEFS

622 The position of a chief was neither hereditary nor elective but wholly self-creative. The young man ambitious of this distinction sought to be conspicuous for energy and daring in war, intelligence in council, and liberality in the giving of feasts and the providing of tobacco for the guests of his lodge. The exhibition of these qualities in more than ordinary degree would win him the respect and confidence of one after another of his band, who were ready to follow his guidance and accept his counsel. When this point was reached he began to have influence and be regarded as a leader or chief. Practice in obtaining popularity was usually productive of skill in retaining it, and once a chief the distinction was pretty certain to attach for life. The greatness or authority of a chief depended wholly

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622 upon his popularity, upon the proportion of the tribe whose
621 confidence could be won and adhesion secured. The num-
622 ber of chiefs that might be in a band was dependent simply upon the number who could secure this following. This system did not necessarily array the members of a band into opposing factions, for several chiefs might enjoy the equal consideration of all.

But besides the general respect in which a chief was held he had his purely personal followers, consisting usually of his relatives and nearer friends. The bands thus constituted often give themselves distinctive appellations, which continue from generation to generation, though sometimes disappearing in the event of the disruption of a band, to be replaced in time by another. Thus among the Blackfeet were The Big Swans, Big Crowfeet and Big Plumes; among the Piegans, Little Robes, Skunks and Big Lakes, and among the Bloods, the Fish-eaters, Skunks, Quarrelers,
173 Back-fats and Foxes. Here is to be seen the manner in
621 which the Blackfoot nation became divided into the three
619 recognized tribes. As one of these bands became powerful, it was liable to drop off from the parent tribe as the result of a quarrel, or merely by reason of weight of numbers, for there seems to be a natural law of the savage condition which forbids tribal existence beyond certain numbers. In
[175] proof of this theory we may cite the Little Robe band of Piegans. At the time the whites first became acquainted with the Piegans (1831), though avowedly a part of the Piegan tribe they lived wholly by themselves, seldom meeting with the remainder of the tribe and showing so marked a line of separation that by one or two writers they were classed as a separate tribe. Had they not unfortunately suffered utter extermination a few years later at the hands of the Crows, it is probable that long ere this their tribal independence would have been universally conceded. It is to be remarked that the Blackfeet preserved no tradition of their separation into tribes, which, added to their uniformly amicable relations, is strong circumstantial evidence of its having been the result of the quiet working of natural causes, as violent disruption would have been a matter of so much importance as to demand preservation in tradition.

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000 so much importance as to demand preservation in tradition.

WAR PARTIES

726 Among the Blackfeet a war party was made up without the ceremony peculiar to most tribes. A chief or warrior desiring to go to war announced his intention and sought [623] for volunteers. When a sufficient number was obtained, [701] the next step was to secure the consent of the soldiers' lodge, which was rarely withheld. Sometimes, however, in cases of public danger, rendering it desirable to keep the whole force of the village together, or where the proposed expedition was against a friendly tribe, permission was not given. Occasionally, but rarely, a war party would steal off without the authority of the lodge but this was a 535 hazardous undertaking. Occasionally before setting out 726 upon their enterprise, the members of the war party would [43] perform the Begging dance. This consisted simply of calling in succession at the lodges of the wealthiest citizens, and dancing before it until the owners made them some present calculated to promote their enterprise as moccasins, 726 powder, lead, tobacco. At last, all preliminaries being concluded, the leader of the band, or partisan, as he is technically called, appoints a place of rendezvous at some distance from the camp, when singly or in small parties and by different routes, the warriors repair under cover of night to the designated spot and before morning all are assembled and the expedition begun.

WAR

721 A state of war was considered to exist the instant any tribe hitherto at peace with the Blackfeet committed depredations upon their property or killed any of their number. [622] Sometimes the chiefs and head men sought to restrain the mad impulses of their followers bent upon revenge until a calm investigation of the circumstances could be had, but usually the whole tribe became infected with the excitement and headlong retaliation rendered permanent a breach [728] that might have been easily filled. Though all Indian tribes understand and occasionally practiced the art of

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721 negotiation for peace, they seem incapable, as a rule, of
[728] that higher diplomacy which has for its difficult object the soothing of the hate and irritation which threatened to precipitate two hitherto friendly peoples into a state of war. A striking and unfortunate illustration of this fact will be found further on in our history when we treat of the rupture, after centuries of good feeling, between the Gros Ventres and the Blackfoot bands. The Blackfeet had a convenient custom of regarding every tribe not included in their confederation as enemies, and waged incessant war against them. These will be spoken of more at length hereafter.

721 But lest the reader should be misled as to the meaning of
171 the word war when applied to the state of chronic hostilities existing between Indian tribes we will pause to explain it more at length. It has by no means the same signification as when applied to the beligerent attitude of civilized states, where the whole power of the nation is exerted to force the adversary to the wall and conquer an early and permanent peace. It is improbable that a single instance could be sighted within the whole range of history of such conduct of a war upon the part of any Indian tribe of the western plains. These tribes are at war simply when upon killing or horse stealing terms, and the war is carried on solely by insignificant bands of restless or ambitious warriors who are willing to skulk for days or weeks in ravines or mountain fastnesses or lurk in the thickets of streams, enduring hunger, cold, heat, and toil, and every hardship for the opportunity occasionally afforded to take the scalp of some unfortunate straggler or drive off a band of unprotected horses. It is rare that a battle of any consequence takes place, and when it does it is more frequently the result of accident than of design.

648 Each tribe of the Blackeet had its pet enemies, to whom
721 it principally devoted its warlike attentions. Thus the
171 Bloods usually sought out the Crows, the Piegans carried their arms against the Flatheads and the Nez Perces, the Blackfeet fought the same tribes, while the valor of the Gros Ventres was mainly directed against the Crows. All cordially hated the Assinniboines, and fought them wherever

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encountered, but seldom made them a special object of attack. The several tribes usually carried on their wars alone, but sometimes sought co-operation for defensive purposes or to undertake some enterprise of unusual magnitude. When such an alliance was desired, the tribe asking assistance despatched an envoy, charged with the message and a quantity of tobacco, to the tribe whose co-operation was desired. Upon the arrival of the envoy at his destination, he announced his errand, when a council was called to hear it more in detail. Presenting his tobacco, the envoy then interpreted in a speech what the tobacco said, which was the message he had been instructed to deliver. The council then deliberated upon the propriety of complying with the request; if a favorable answer was to be returned they smoked the proffered tobacco, by which they obligated themselves to do all in their power to forward the cause of their allies; if they declined their assistance, the tobacco was returned unused. Payment for such assistance was rarely tendered among the Blackfeet and never demanded. When the individual sought the assistance of friends to redress private wrongs a similar method of procedure was employed, but in this case a reward was usually proffered and accepted if the services were rendered.

Peace

Peace was made only by the chiefs and soldiers in formal council.

Societies

Among the Blackfeet there were no organization analogous to our secret societies, but two fraternities existed which though small in numbers and importance demand notice. The first is the Dog Band, or The Dogs, a military association whose creed is never to flinch in battle. It is composed of young men distinguished for courage and address in war, but its obligations and practices render it unpopular and it seldom numbers more than fifty persons. It indulges at intervals in a begging tour of the village, entering at will into any lodge, dashing about on all fours, yelping and catering in imitation of a dog. The Dog is only to

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575 be got rid of by the making of the desired gift, but for
701 the annoyances the inmates of the lodge suffer by the un-
[431] ceremonious invasion they are entitled to treat the dog as if he were indeed the animal he impersonates and cuff and kick him to their hearts' content. This association is
[887] greatly dreaded. The old men have an organization known as the Bull Band. The Bulls have no special creed, but are old men of sense and discretion who have ceased to burn with the fire of military ardor but are yet fit for active service when it becomes needful or desirable. They number seventy or eighty members and are held in considerable repute and enjoy participation in the councils of the nation. Each tribe of the Blackfeet has its own Dog and Bull bands, but there is no connection between them.

CRIMES

692 If we except disobedience to the mandates of the Soldiers'
673 Lodge, the penalties for which we have already mentioned, there were among the Blackfeet no recognized public wrongs which the body politic, or state, as such was bound or expected to notice and mete out the punishment therefor.

[627] All crimes of whatever grade were purely private wrongs and for which the Blackfoot code provided no penalty but such as the injured party, himself, or his friends, was able to inflict.

674 And if we accept as crimes only those offenses for which custom had in some degree regulated the penalty, we find ourselves reduced to a list of ridiculously small proportions, comprehending in fact only larceny, adultery and homicide.
673 There were other wrongs which the individual might sus-
683 tain as assault and battery, or slander, but the injured party was left to inflict upon the offender such punishment as he chose or was able to inflict. And even larceny might with more propriety have been assigned to that class of wrongs, as reclamation of the property stolen was the only
685 positive right of the plundered party. Theft was rare except in case of horses, and even this species of property was only unlawfully taken from a fellow Blackfoot to enable the ambitious young warrior who had no horse of his own to secure a mount for a meditated foray or the love-sick swain

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685 similarly destitute to purchase from another tribe the wife of his choice. In the former case the horse, or an equivalent, was returned at the end of the expedition, in the latter, the property could only be recovered by the owner himself going after it, in which event it was religiously returned to him. With the return of the property, however, the wife might be reclaimed by her relatives; but in case of these unique matrimonial transactions some arrangement was usually effected by which the wife was retained to her adroit admirer. Of adultery we have already spoken. Homicide rendered the slayer amenable to death at the hands of any relative of the deceased, and he was not excused if it could be shown the killing were ever so accidental. But if the slayer were thus dealt with by the relatives of the deceased, the matter did not stop here. His relatives were privileged to avenge his death, and thus the process might go on indefinitely to the utter extinction of one or the other family. It is to be remarked that if the slayer himself were not forthcoming so that vengeance could be visited upon him, then any relative of his might be made the victim instead. It is seen to what a bloody extent these feuds would be carried did not custom come to the rescue with the device of "Covering the Body," which signifies to recompense the relatives of the slain by suitable presents and thus appease the desire for vengeance. These offerings might be accepted or rejected at pleasure, but generally they were accepted; sometimes with more or less jockeying for a larger quantity. In this manner these affairs were usually ended at an earlier or later stage of the "blood for blood" procedure.

682 672 [627] 627 431 682

Forts and Guards

Like most nomadic tribes, the Blackfeet never fortified their camps, and it was rare even that they chose them with any reference to their possibilities of defense. It was common with war parties, however, to erect a rude breast-work of logs when camping in exposed places, and often in action, when hard pressed, they dug small trenches with their knives, or threw together a hasty rampart of such loose material as was at hand. It was not their custom to maintain a guard about the camp either by day or night, so that,

712 [171] [342] 726 721

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726 contrary to the popular belief, the surprise of a village was
72 not difficult. In times of apprehended danger the young men would lie in concealment upon the outskirts of the camp, and were vigilant and effective sentinels. Neither did the camp maintain any system of outposts when its often vast herds of horses were grazed in the surrounding
233 valleys and upon the hill tops. Each family looked after
231 its own interests in this respect, driving its horses where it will, and leaving them at pleasure, unprotected or watched by
[887] some member of the lodge, usually a boy or woman. Sometimes some old warrior, incapacitated for more worthy service, had a general superintendence of the boy herders, seeing that they did not stray too far or loiter too long when the hour arrived for driving the herds into the village. Usually the horses were all brought in before night and picketed in
[417] the vicinity of the lodges. Horse corrals were sometimes
[462] made of small poles by the united labors of the squaws of the village within which the horses of the whole village were nightly assembled. When no danger was apprehended, bands of horses were sometimes driven to a secluded place
[721] and left for days together without a guard. It is thus seen why a daring war party could successfully approach within the vicinity of a village and drive off the outlying bands of horses which were ever such a temptation to the enterprising and adventurous brave.

Division of Labor

462 The women performed all the drudgery of camp. The only occupations reserved to the men were war and the chase.

Smallpox Among the Blackfeet

164 Smallpox visited the Blackfeet a second time in the year 1849 and again in 1869-70. No account of losses in the first case has been recorded.

PRESENT STRENGTH OF THE BLACKFEET

162 Major Culbertson says the Blackfeet now (1876) number three hundred lodges; Bloods, three hundred, averaging six persons to a lodge,

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STATISTICS OF VARIOUS TRIBES

171 231 The number of horses to the lodge possessed by the various tribes about the year 1830 was as follows:

Crows	15
Piegans	10
Blackfeet and Bloods	5
Gros Ventres	5
Flatheads and Nez Perces	50
Assiniboines	2

000 The Assiniboines were regarded as the poorest Indians on the upper Missouri and held in great contempt by surrounding tribes. The Crows were the wealthiest. At the time of building Fort Union it was estimated that the Assiniboines had only one gun to ten lodges, and even at the present day (1876) they are the most poorly armed Indians in Montana. The horses of the Indians west of the Rocky mountains were not considered as good a breed as those to the east. They were fleet but less hardy.

INDIAN TRADITIONS

The Creation by Buffalo Calf

At first the earth was covered with water, and the only living things were fishes, animals that dwelt in the water and water fowl. After a while the Great Spirit, wanting dry earth to tread upon, sent a bird down through the water to bring up some earth, and the bird succeeded in obtaining some from the bottom of the deep. This the Great Spirit took, and of it created land. How he did it Buffalo Calf could not tell, but the land commenced to grow and crowd the waters before it until at last only creeks and rivers and lakes were left. And thus it has ever since remained. I then remarked to Buffalo Calf that the Sioux say that the Great Spirit took the earth brought up out of the water and blew it over the water when it became dry land. "Yes," said he, "that is right, that is the way he did it." After the earth was made the Great Spirit created man and land animals and grass and trees, everything, in fact, on the earth

[For additional information on rhetorical style and the use of gestures in counting coup, see Category 555.]

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[For information on the "Soldier's Lodge", see Category 623.]